

Interest in Advanced Practice Nursing in the Czech Republic

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Many countries are seeking to improve health care and mainly efficiency in health care delivery by reviewing the roles of health professionals, including nurses. Developing new and more advanced roles for nurses could improve access to care in the face of a limited or diminishing supply of doctors. It might also contain costs by delegating tasks away from more expensive doctors.

In most countries, one of the main reasons for developing more advanced roles for nurses is to improve access to care in a context of a limited supply of doctors. Another reason for the development of APN roles is to promote higher quality of care, for instance by creating new posts to provide more intensive follow-up and counselling for patients with chronic illness in primary care or the creation of advanced nursing posts in hospitals to oversee quality improvement initiatives. In some countries the development of APN is also seen as a way to contain cost.

Advanced practice nurses include various titles in different countries reflecting the different roles they may be playing and the degree of specialisation or focus on certain patient groups. This OECD study has focussed on two main categories of advanced practice nurses that exist in several countries: nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists.

Nurse practitioners (NPs) tend to practice in primary care and provide a set of services that might otherwise be performed by doctors (e.g., being the first contact for people with minor illness, providing routine follow-up of patients with chronic conditions, prescribing drugs or ordering tests).

On the other hand, clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) tend to work in hospitals, where their responsibilities include providing leadership and education for staff nurses to promote high standards of quality of care and patient safety.

The Czech Republic is still just beginning to explore possibilities to develop advanced practice roles for nurses although nurses may already be playing some advanced roles in the area of chronic diseases and injuries in an unofficial (informal) way.

Future directions in the area of advanced practice nursing in the Czech republic include the following steps:

- Defining different nurse specializations through regulation.
- Developing educational programmes in nurse specializations to allow them to get a special professional qualification (e.g., chemotherapeutics administration).
- Providing government financial support for positions.

Protected Titles/Definitions

Advanced nursing practice in the Czech Republic is currently defined as including two categories of nurses:

- 1) A registered nurse with a specialisation (nurse specialist).

2) A nurse with a Master's degree oriented towards a clinical discipline (e.g., Geriatrics, Oncology, Cardiology).

Nurse specialists are increasingly involved in the management of chronic diseases such as asthma, cardiac care, stroke (follow-up), diabetes, cancer, and chronic kidney failure.

Regulation

Act no. 96/2004 coll. February 4, 2004 on the conditions for the obtaining and recognition of qualifications for pursuing nonmedical professions and for carrying out activities in connection with the provision of health care and on the amendments of some of the related acts (act for nonmedical professions).

Education

The basic education for all nurses in the Czech Republic include three years study after secondary education. To become a specialised nurse, an additional two years of training is required or two years Master's degree.

Prescription Authority

On the other hand, nurses are not allowed to prescribe drugs in the Czech Republic.

Web Links

www.mzcr.cz

Social Media Presence

Magazines: The Florence, The Nurse.

References

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